(c) whether it is also a fact that the third phase has been slated f completion by March, 2010?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K. H. MUNIYAPPA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government has approved upgradation of 4,000 km. of National Highways under NHDP Phase IIIA at a cost of Rs. 22,000 crores on **BOT** (Toll) basis. Approval has also been given for initiating advance action in the form of preparation of Detailed Project Reports for another 6,000 km of NHs under NHDP Phase IIIB. NHDP Phase IIIA is scheduled for completion by December, 2009.

Transhipment terminal at Vizhinjam

460. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present stage of the proposed international container transhipment terminal at Vizhinjam in Kerala; and

(b) the time by which the project is likely to be commenced and completed?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The responsibility for the development of ports other then major ports lies with the State Government concerned which also have administrative control over such ports under the provisions of Indian Ports Act, 1908. The responsibility for the development of Vizhinjam port, which is not a major port, lies with the Government of Kerala. However, according to the information furnished by the Government of Kerala, after conclusion of the ongoing bidding process for development of the terminal, the Concession Agreement is expected to be executed by December 2005. The construction work is expected to commence after the technical and financial closure of the project which may require about an year's time. The construction period for the first of the three phases of the project is three years. Subject to things proceeding as planned, the project is expected to be on stream by 2009. In the meantime, the Government of Kerala has established a Special Purpose Company (SPC) with a view to providing external support infrastructure, namely, rail/road connectivity and power/water supply to the project.